
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 5463

Brief Description: Modifying forest fire protection assessments.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Rockefeller, Morton, Shin and Rasmussen; by request of Department of Natural Resources).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases the Forest Fire Protection Assessments paid by forest landowners.

Hearing Date: 3/19/07

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The costs of forest fire protection are intended to be equitably shared between forest landowners and the state. Owners of forest land are under an obligation to provide forest fire protection on their land at a level that provides adequate protection against the spread of fire from or across their land. However, if a landowner's property is located on forest land not included within the boundaries of a rural or municipal fire district, and the landowner fails to provide adequate protection against the spread of forest fire, then the landowner must pay to the Department of Natural Resources (Department) a forest fire protection assessment (assessment).

Landowners paying the assessment are billed both at a flat rate and at an additional rate according to the size of the forest land they own. All landowners must pay a flat rate assessment fee of \$14.50. This flat rate fee is paid by all forest land owners regardless of ownership size. Landowners who own more than 50 acres of forest land must pay the flat rate fee plus an additional 25 cents on each acre over the initial 50 acres.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The forest fire protection assessment charge for forest landowners is increased. The flat fee assessment paid for the first 50 acres of forest land owned is increased from \$14.50 to \$17.50. The additional per acre assessment that applies to each acre owned over 50 acres is increased from 25 cents per acre to 27 cents per acre.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.